

## NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

## CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

## CONTOUR ORCHARD AND OTHER FRUIT AREA

(Acre)

## CODE 331

**DEFINITION**

Planting orchards, vineyards, or small fruits so that all cultural operations are done on the contour.

**PURPOSE**

To reduce soil and water loss, to better control and use water, and to operate farm equipment more easily.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

On sloping land where soil and water losses need to be controlled, especially if a permanent cover is not established.

**CRITERIA**

Rows may vary from the contour up to 2 percent. Up to 3 percent row grade may be permitted within 150 feet of the approach to a grassed waterway, field border or other stable outlet.

Soil loss will be within acceptable levels. Potential ephemeral or gully erosion will be addressed using stable outlets, grassed waterways, diversions, and other appropriate practices.

Row spacing will meet growth requirement to allow equipment operations.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Consider inter planting of annual crops (alley cropping) to provide for an economic return.

Consider layout of frost protection or irrigation system when laying out contours to avoid conflict of surface pipelines with cultural practices.

Consider adaptive vegetative cover in-between tree rows to minimize erosion or soil compaction.

Consider the use of vegetative filter or buffers to minimize off site loss of pesticides to surface runoff or aerial drift.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

The following will be documented in the conservation plan narrative and/or contract.

- Percentage of row grade
- Width of rows
- Type of crop

**MAINTENANCE**

Perform cultural operations on the contour, periodically inspect and repair any erosion, and apply soil amendments to maintain adequate vegetative cover.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the most current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.